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ABSTRACT

Construction began on the memorial to Abraham Lincoln in 1915, fifty years after his assassination. Sculptor, Daniel Chester French, designed the statue to honor the 16th U.S. President. French had gained a national reputation with his earlier portrayal of "The Minute Man," a statue to honor those colonials who died at Lexington and Concord (Massachusetts) in 1775. President Warren G. Harding dedicated the building and the sculpture on May 30, 1922. The marble likeness of Abraham Lincoln stares across the reflecting pool at the Washington Monument on the Capitol's grassy mall. The memorial has been the scene of many events and public protests since its completion. This lesson plan furnishes an overview of the memorial's construction; identifies the National History Standards and National Civics and Government Standards correlations; presents seven diverse activities for classroom implementation; and provides three historic photographs for analysis (Reflecting Pool; Unfinished Lincoln Memorial; and Ku Klux Klan.) Additional photos are attached. Contains a photo analysis worksheet. (BT)

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TEACHING WITH DOCUMENTS

The Unfinished Lincoln Memorial

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Teaching With Documents Lesson Plan:

The Unfinished Lincoln Memorial

Background

Today a majestic marble likeness of Abraham Lincoln stares across the reflecting pool (Document 1 - photo from Records of the Environmental Protection Agency, Record Group 412, item 412-DA-4090) at the Washington Monument on the capital's grassy mall. This memorial to Lincoln has been the backdrop for many important public protests and events since its completion in 1922. It was on the memorial's steps that singer Marian Anderson gave her Easter Sunday concert in 1939 after being turned away from Constitution Hall by the Daughters of the American Revolution and where Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., delivered his "I Have a Dream" speech in August 1963. Antiwar protesters came to the memorial steps in the late 1960s and early 1970s to raise their voices against the U.S. role in Vietnam.

Construction began on the memorial to Lincoln in 1915, fifty years after his assassination. American sculptor Daniel Chester French designed the statue to honor the 16th President. French had gained a national reputation with his earlier portrayal of "The Minute Man," a statue to honor those colonials who died at Lexington and Concord in 1775. In describing his tribute to Lincoln, French said: "The memorial tells you just what manner of man you are come to pay homage to; his simplicity, his grandeur, and his power." President Warren G. Harding dedicated the building and the sculpture on May 30, 1922.

The photograph shown here (Document 2) captures workers assembling French's statue of Lincoln in 1920. It is a haunting reminder of the unfilled promises implicit in Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, for the 1920s saw heightened racial, ethnic, and religious tensions in this country. The causes for increased tensions included fierce competition for jobs among demobilized soldiers, both black and white; the migration of rural blacks to urban centers in the North and the South; and the infusion into the melting pot of immigrants who differed in cultural background from those who had come earlier. One consequence of these tensions was the rise of nativism, or giving first place to "native" Americans; another was the rebirth of the Ku Klux Klan (Document 3: photo from Records of the United States Information Agency, Record Group

306, item 306-NT-650-4) in all its virulence. The headless image of Lincoln is prophetic of the somber aspects of the decade that is most remembered for its flappers, flivvers, and frivolity.

This photograph is from Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital, Record Group 42, item 42-M-J-1. The photographer is unknown, as is the identity of the central figure in the photograph.

The Documents

Document 1: Reflecting Pool

Document 2: Unfinished Lincoln Memorial, National Archives and Records Administration, Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital, Record Group 42

Document 3: Klu Klux Klan

Lesson Resources

Standards Correlations

Teaching Activities

Photograph Analysis Worksheet

Page URL: http://www.archives.gov/digital_classroom/lessons/unfinished_lincoln_memorial/unfinished_lincoln_memorial.html

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Teaching Activities

Standards Correlations

This lesson correlates to the National History Standards.

- Era 7-The Emergence of Modern America (1890-1930)
  - Standard 3D-Demonstrate understanding of politics and international affairs in the 1920s.

This lesson correlates to the National Standards for Civics and Government.

- II.B.1-Students should be able to explain how certain characteristics tend to distinguish American society from most other societies.

Cross-curricular Connections

Share this exercise with your history, government, art, and language arts colleagues.

Activities

1. Photographs, like all evidence, should be examined with care. Students should be aware that, like written documents, photographs reflect a point of view, may even be staged, and should be used with other sources of evidence. Before discussing this photograph with students, post it on the bulletin board for several days and direct students to look at it closely. It is useful to divide a photograph into quadrants and to look at each in turn, noting striking details.

2. Photographs freeze events in time and evoke in the viewer a memory of the event. In this way many photographs become symbols of an event or series of events--the student kneeling by her slain classmate at Kent State, Lyndon Johnson's swearing-in as President (photo from the John F. Kennedy Library, item NLK-WHP-ST-ST1A163) aboard Air Force One, and the Marines raising the American flag on Iwo Jima (photo from General Records of the Department of the Navy, Record Group 80, item 80-G-413988). Discuss the photograph of Lincoln's statue as a symbol of the 1920s. Develop a list of photographic images that are symbolic for

students. Consider with students how to judge the validity of a photograph as a symbol.

3. Develop a list of students' images of President Abraham Lincoln: for example, self-taught youth, great debater, advocate of abolition of slavery, assassinated hero. Direct students to investigate these images of Lincoln to see if they stand up under scrutiny.

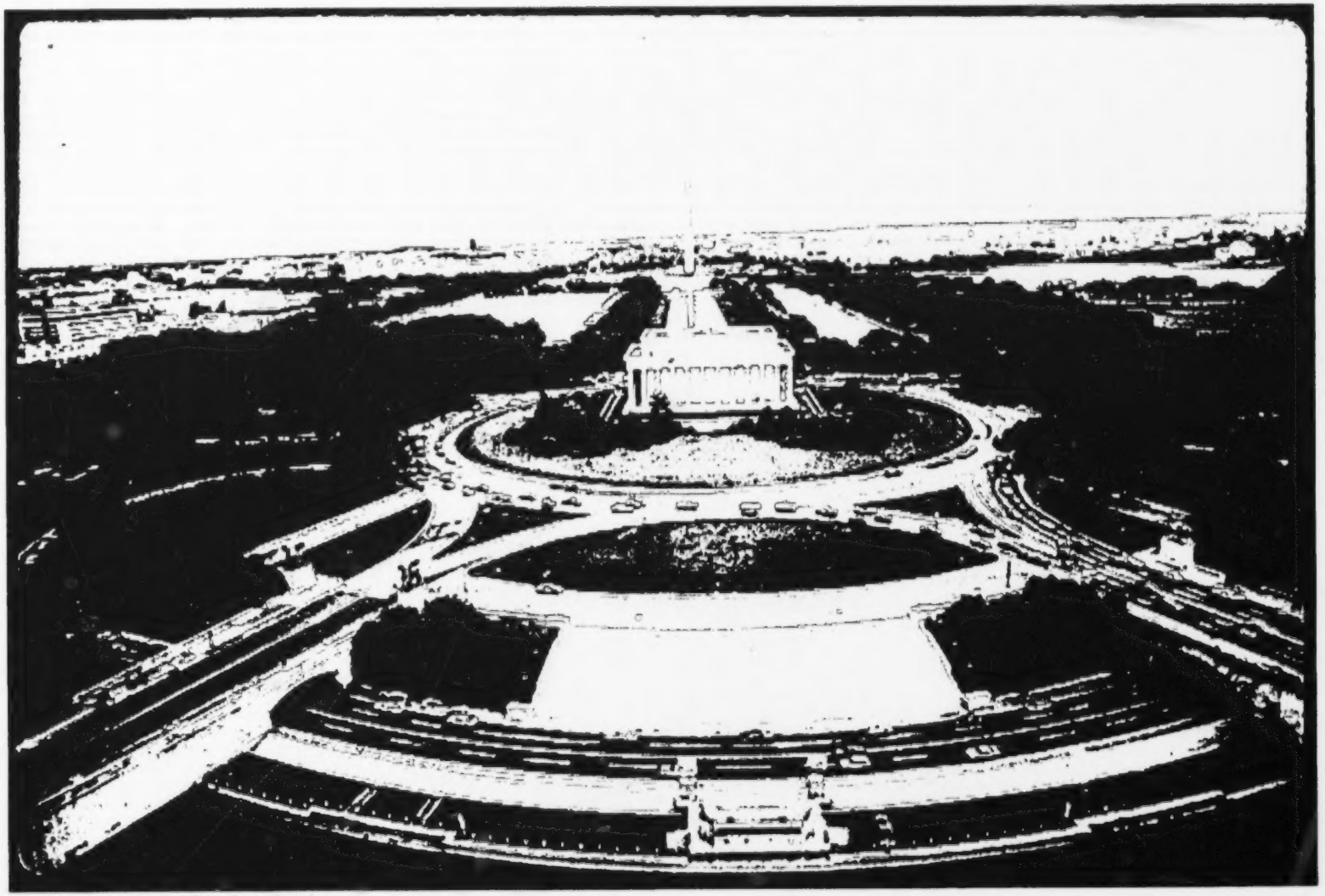
4. Abraham Lincoln has been honored in many ways (Lincoln Tunnel in New York City, the Lincoln penny, Lincoln University, etc.). Assign students to survey all of the ways Lincoln has been honored. Has your own town honored Lincoln with a park, school, or street named for him? Create a bulletin board that illustrates the many ways that we honor past Presidents.

5. Washington, DC, is the site of the memorials to many famous former Presidents and other prominent Americans. There are also memorials to those who served and died in American wars. The memorial to those who served in Vietnam [http://www.nps.gov/vive/] was dedicated on Veterans Day in November 1982. The final design for the memorial created some controversy among veterans' groups. Assign students to investigate the areas of controversy and the compromise solution for this or other memorials including the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial [http://www.nps.gov/fdrm] and the Korean War Memorial [http://www.nps.gov/kwvm].

6. Citizens' groups successfully lobbied Congress to honor slain civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., by declaring his birthdate a national holiday. Direct students to discover how national holidays are created.

7. If you come to Washington, DC, be sure to visit the Lincoln Memorial. It is especially moving to see it at night. Or, if you find yourself in Stockbridge, MA, visit Chesterwood, the home and studio of sculptor Daniel Chester French. [http://www.nationaltrust.org/national_trust_sites/chesterwood.html]

Some of the images included in this article and more than 50 additional photographs depicting the Lincoln Memorial are available through the The Unfinished Lincoln Memorial Main Page at http://www.archives.gov/digital_classroom/lessons/unfinished_lincoln_memorial/unfinished_lincoln_memorial.html



Document 1: Reflecting Pool

Document 2: Unfinished Lincoln Memorial

Document 3: Klu Klux Klan

Lyndon Johnson's swearing-in as President (photo from the John F. Kennedy Library, item NLK-WHP-ST-ST1A163

The Marines raising the American flag on Iwo Jima (photo from General Records of the Department of the Navy, Record Group 80, item 80-G-413988)

Photo Analysis Worksheet

Step 1. Observation

A. Study the photograph for 2 minutes. Form an overall impression of the photograph and then examine individual items. Next, divide the photo into quadrants and study each section to see what new details become visible.

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B. Use the chart below to list people, objects, and activities in the photograph.

People	Objects	Activities

Step 2. Inference

Based on what you have observed above, list three things you might infer from this photograph.

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_____

Step 3. Questions

A. What questions does this photograph raise in your mind?

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B. Where could you find answers to them?

_____

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Designed and developed by the
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Page URL: http://www.archives.gov/digital_classroom/lessons/analysis_worksheets/photo.html

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